

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:IMSILINS:LG
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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CVIS, EEWT, RO

SUBJECT: JEWISH EMIGRATION: RABBI SCHINDLER'S CALL ON
HARTMAN AND ARMITAGE, AUGUST 25

REFS: A) BUCHAREST 4950; B) BUCHAREST 4931; C) BUCH 4915

1. RABBI SCHINDLER'S COMMENTS ON HIS REACTION TO ROMANIAN VISIT, EXPRESSED IN THE GREATER PRIVACY OF WASHINGTON, WERE SOMEWHAT MORE ACERBIC THAN THOSE CONVEYED TO YOU IN BUCHAREST. WHILE HE REMAINS CONVINCED THAT JEWS IN ROMANIA ARE BETTER OFF THAN IN OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WITH WHICH HE IS FAMILIAR (E.G. POLAND), HE DESCRIBED THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF JEWS IN ROMANIA AS A "SHAM" AND SAID HE HAD GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE HEAVY ATTENDANCE AT RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES HE ATTENDED WAS ARRANGED LARGELY FOR HIS BENEFIT. HE SAID HE FOUND WIDE-SPREAD IGNORANCE OF THE MOST BASIC TENETS OF THE JEWISH FAITH AND WAS "NOT IMPRESSED" WITH RABBI ROSEN'S QUALITIES AS A SPIRITUAL LEADER.

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2. RABBI SCHINDLER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT JEWS IN ROMANIA

HAVE A GOOD SOCIAL/COMMUNAL LIFE, THANKS PARTLY TO RABBI ROSEN'S ORGANIZATIONAL TALENT. HE DID FIND RATHER DISTURBING RABBI ROSEN'S EVIDENT ZEST FOR EXERCISING THE

POWER HE WIELDS AS CONTROLLER OF ALL FINANCIAL GRANTS TO MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY.

3. AS TO THE SIZE OF THE REMAINING JEWISH COMMUNITY, RABBI SCHINDLER THOUGHT 65,000 WAS THE BEST ESTIMATE. YEHUDA HELLMAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, INITIALLY SEEMED WILLING TO ACCEPT 50,000 AS A MORE ACCURATE FIGURE. (FYI: WE WILL USE 60,000 AS OUR BEST CURRENT ESTIMATE IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS.) MOST OF THESE, RABBI SCHINDLER SAID, SEEM TO BE OLDER PEOPLE.

4. HE REITERATED HIS FIRM CONVICTION THAT A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF JEWS IN ROMANIA WANT TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL BUT FEEL PREVENTED--POSSIBLY BY IMAGINED FEAR OF THE CONSEQUENCES--FROM DOING SO. HE BASES THIS BELIEF ON SURREPTITIOUSLY PASSED NOTES AND OTHER SIGNALS. WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH ACADEMIC COMMUNITY, VIRTUALLY ALL WHO WISH TO EMIGRATE WANT TO GO TO ISRAEL, HE SAID.

5. RABBI SCHINDLER COMMENTED THAT THE ISRAELI EMBASSY IN BUCHAREST DID NOT SEEM "WELL VERSED" IN EMIGRATION MATTERS. HE DID NOT WISH TO SPECULATE ABOUT OTHER CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH THESE PROBLEMS ARE HANDLED.

6. EXPLAINING HIS DILEMMA ABOUT HOW TO TESTIFY AT THE SEPTEMBER 8 SENATE HEARINGS ON ROMANIAN MFN, RABBI SCHINDLER ASKED FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN'S ADVICE. HARTMAN SAID WE SEE NO PROFIT IN INTERRUPTING THE DIALOGUE WE HAVE GOING WITH THE ROMANIANS ON EMIGRATION BY SCUTTLE THE TRADE AGREEMENT. THERE WILL BE ANOTHER REVIEW SESSION NEXT YEAR WHICH CAN BE USED TO PRESS FOR CONTINUED FAVORABLE ACTION BY THE GOR. RABBI SCHINDLER SEEMS INCLINED TO AGREE, BUT WILL PRESS FOR MORE PROGRESS ON INDIVIDUAL CASES BEFORE COMMITTING HIMSELF. AMBASSADOR NICOLAE HAS ASKED TO MEET WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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HIM, AND HE WILL TAKE THAT OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK FURTHER CLARIFICATION ON THE 600 APPROVALS AND 410 DENIALS HE DISCUSSED WITH PATAN. (WE PASSED HIM LATEST ROMANIAN REPORT ON THIS CONTAINED IN BUCHAREST 4950.)

7. RABBI SCHINDLER WAS HIGHLY COMPLIMENTARY OF SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE GIVEN HIM DURING HIS VISIT BY EMBASSY AND CHARGE VIETS. KISSINGER

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